# HURC 432/632: Mapping New Media—Theory, Aesthetics, Politics

Instructor: Dr. Michael F. Miller
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Thursday: 10am—12:50pm, Sewell 562

Office: Herring 309 Office Hours: by appointment

All too often the computational technologies and methods that drive much of the work in the Spatial Humanities are rarely examined as objects of study in their own right. This course encourages students to locate and map the complex relations between philosophies of technology, computational media, and born-digital cultural phenomena. Throughout the semester we will adopt an interdisciplinary frame of critical media studies. The affordances of such an approach will help students from many intellectual backgrounds map the technically-mediated spaces of contemporary theoretical, cultural, and political production. For our purposes we will understand as broadly and capaciously as possible the concept of "space" as it is used in Spatial Humanities discourse. Such an emphasis allows us to critically unpack the epistemological, political, and cultural assumptions, histories, and concepts that are hard-wired into new media technologies and the varied uses to which they are put.

In addition, this course will provide students with opportunities to develop relevant technical skills such as GIS. Developing students' technical skills alongside more humanistic or theoretical knowledge bases will provide them with a more holistic and well-rounded understanding of the Spatial Humanities, new media, and digital culture.

In addition to **regular attendance** and **active participation**, students will be required to:

1. Complete some **short writing exercises**
2. Complete a **1,500-word review essay** on a book of their choosing relevant to the course
3. Give **2 in-class presentations**
4. deliver a **conference length presentation at the end of the course** (8-10 pages, 20 minutes)
5. create and distribute an **annotated bibliography of 10 relevant sources not covered in class**
6. Complete a **final research project** on a topic relevant to the course

## Required texts

-Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*
-Mark Jarzombek, *Digital Stockholm Syndrome in the Post-Ontological Age*
-Yves Citton, *Mediarchy*
-Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*
-Natasha Stagg, *Surveys: A Novel*

-Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right*

**Schedule**

January 16: Introductions

**Read for the first class:**

-Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology"
-Vilém Flusser, "My Atlas"
-Dominic Pettman, "The Species Without Qualities: Critical Media Theory and the Posthumanities"
-Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, "Did Somebody Say New Media?"

January 23: Theorizing (New) Media

-Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message," "Gadget Lover," "Media as Translators"
-Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Constituents of a Theory of Media"
-Friedrich Kittler, "History of Communications Media"
-John Guillory, "Genesis of the Media Concept"
-Mark B.N. Hansen, "New Media"

**Due in class: a 500 word précis of Kittler or Enzensberger**

January 30: Cognition and/as Computation

-David Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation* (1-128)
-Vannevar Bush, "As We May Think"
-Alan Turing, "Computing Machinery and Intelligence"
-N. Katherine Hayles, "The Cognitive Nonconscious: Enlarging the Mind of the Humanities"

February 6: Media-Ontological Suspicion and the Archive

-Boris Groys, *Under Suspicion: A Phenomenology of Media* (1-90, 161-180).
-Bernard Stiegler, "Memory"

February 13: **NO CLASS** — Spring Recess

February 20: The Reality of the Mass Media

-Niklas Luhmann, *The Reality of the Mass Media*
-John Durham Peters, "Mass Media"

February 27: Technologies of Control

-Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control"
-Alexander Galloway, *Protocol: How Control Exists After Decentralization* (1-143).
-Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics* (1-76, 247-302).

**Due in class: a 250 word précis of Deleuze**

March 5: Phenomenologies of Globalized Space

- Fredric Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping"
-Emilio Sauri, "Cognitive Mapping, Then and Now: Postmodernism, *Indecision,* and American Literary Globalism"
-Jason Farman, "Map Interfaces and the Production of Locative Media Space"
-Floating Sheep Collective, "What Would a Floating Sheep Map?"

March 12: Distant Reading and The Spatial Turn in World Literature

-Franco Moretti, "Maps," "Network Theory, Plot Analysis"
-Christian Thorne, "The Sea Is Not a Place; or, Putting the World Back Into World Literature"
-Gayatri Spivak, "Imperative to Reimagine the Planet"
-Ursula K. Heise, "From the Blue Planet to Google Earth: Environmentalist, Ecocriticism, and the Imagination of the Global"

March 19: **NO CLASS** —Spring Break

March 26: Digital Stockholm Syndrome

-Mark Jarzombek, *Digital Stockholm Syndrome in the Post-Ontological Age*
-Alexander Galloway, "The Unworkable Interface," "Are Some Things Unrepresentable?"
-explore MIT's Civic Data Design Lab

**Due in class: 1,500-word book review**

April 2: Platforms, Politics, Media

-Yves Citton, *Mediarchy*

April 9: Biopolitics and Platform Surveillance

-Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*
-John Cheney-Lippold, "A New Algorithmic Identity: Soft Biopolitics and the Modulation of Control"
-watch Hito Steyerl, "How Not To Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File."

**Due in class: abstract for final paper/conference presentation**

April 16: "Influencer" Culture and Normcore as Post-Critique

-Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," *A History of Sexuality Vol. 1* (52-73), *A History of Sexuality Vol. 3* (37-68)
-Natasha Stagg, *Surveys: A Novel*
-Alice Marwick, "You May Know Me From YouTube: (Micro)-Celebrity in Social Media"
-Rory Rowan, "SO NOW! On Normcore"
-watch Ryan Trecartin's *CENTER JENNY*

**Due in class: annotated bibliography**

April 23: Mapping the Lulz: "Theory" as Casualty in the Online Culture Wars

-Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4Chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-right*
-Adrienne Massanari, "#Gamergate and the Fappening: How Reddit's algorithm, governance, and culture support toxic technocultures"
-Richard Rogers, "Mapping and the Politics of Web Space"
-Lisa Nakamura, "Watching White Supremacy on Digital Video Platforms: 'Screw Your Optics, I'm Going In'"
-Leif Weatherby, "Irony and Redundancy: The Alt-Right, Media Manipulation, and German Idealism"
-ANON, "The Alt-Woke Manifesto"

April (?):_____

**-Mini-conference w/ final presentations, date TBD**

**FINAL PROJECTS DUE:**
**SUNDAY MAY 3rd by 11:59pm**

**NO LATE ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED**